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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

EUCALYPTUS DESIGN FOR PORTIERE.

By EMMA A. HALSTED.

T would be well, in carrying out this design in embroidery or outline, to use as nearly as possible the natural color of the eucalyptus leaves as they are—a soft gray-green. I would suggest using the sage colors in art silk, as the nearest to nature, the leaves nearest the main branch the darkest, and for the smaller ones the lighter shades. The buds should be worked in the lightest shade of the green; the blossoms worked in a long stitch with cream white filo-floss (two threads), tipped with the most delicate yellow where dotted, the center of blossom to be worked solidly in a deeper yellow. The main branch should be worked in wood browns, and the younger growth in a red-brown. The



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material is a matter of taste entirely; any heavy curtain material would answer, but the tone of the color would be best in a medium shade of either mahogany or mode brown, this making a good and effective background for the other coloring. The border should be of plush, a shade or two deeper than the color of the curtain. A very rich curtain would be one of velours, the design either outline or worked solidly in rope silk; if the latter, shade the leaves lighter toward the tips; the extreme ends of twigs in one shade only, the lightest. This design would also work up well in lustra colors on heavy linen or furniture sateen, the blossoms being done in the silver and gold bronzes.

P. R., WASHINGTON, D. C.—The ordinary gold paint is not gold at all, but metal powdered under a patent process. If laid on carefully it has the appearance of dead gold, but cannot be burnished, being used as a liquid. The nearest approach to gold leaf on gold painted articles is to give them a coat of gold lacquer when dry, using the lacquer warm.

A LAY SERMON ON CHAIRS.

Of the misery which generations of chair designers have inflicted upon the human race we have before now treated at some length, but it has been given to a gifted editorial writer on the New York Sun to suggest a model the adoption of which will go far to alleviate much of the suffering which springs from the lines upon which the ordinary chair is now planned. "Thousands of models of a properly comfortable seat," he suggests, "will be made this winter in the Northern States by healthy boys playing in snow banks. They will cast themselves backward against the slope of the drifts, and sink and wriggle themselves into a position of heavenly rest, in which the absolute content of the head, shoulders, back, and legs allures body and soul to slumber, even in a temperature of zero. And there is not a chairmaker in this smartest of nations smart enough thus far to have made a chair on the lines left in the snow bank by the boy's body."

"For forty-five years the male American's experience of chairs and other furniture to sit on has been a martyrdom to ignorance and fashion. Their convex surfaces may be the deserved punishment of our national sin of permitting unrestricted immigration. They came from Germany, and were the treacherous gift of German upholsterers to the confiding republic that welcomed and fostered them. By reason of the convexity of the seats, there is not in any well-furnished parlor in this city a comfortable chair or sofa. To sit on them is to sit on a globe or a cannon ball. The seat should always be hollow."

"We recall at this instant the administrator's sale in Albany of the furniture of the great John C. Spencer, ex-Secretary of the Navy, and of nearly every other department in Washington, and we remember the admiration by the most intelligent crowd in the great State street mansion of the 'dishing' of the hair-cloth seats of all the chairs, sofas, and lounges in the several rooms. They had been wisely fashioned, it was said by Mr. Spencer himself, on an approach to the hollowness of the seat of the shoemaker's bench, the most comfortable seat man has ever sat on."

"But the palm for reckless cruelty and unthinking stupidity in the manufacture of furniture for domestic life is easily carried off by our American swift money makers. Consider the rocking chair which curses our places of summer resort, seaside and mountain. Look at the abominable thing laterally! It is the contrivance of an idiot or a devil. The seat slopes steeply backward. The rockers, short and excessively curved, serve additionally to throw the front edge of the seat up into the air. This lifts the sitter's feet from the floor and brings the weight of the legs on the sharp edge of the seat front, and accomplishes a torture which no human being can endure for over fifteen minutes without an outcry or an oath. Regard the thing's back! A recess, too deep by half, invites the shoulders to repose. Below this recess a malicious bulge in the structure jams the tender small of the back, forces the lower part of the spine to sustain the entire weight of the reclining trunk, and defeats possibility of rest to the shoulders. It must have been a Puritan cabinetmaker's idea of the line of beauty that established the curvature of the American rocking chair's back, which from the shoulders up recedes into space and mockingly refuses the weary head."

"Certainly, there is a great fortune for somebody in a perfectly restful seat on chair, sofa, and rocker for American use. The nation is in a state of mad revolt and in a mood to be reckless about the price of relief. The mechanic who starts for this gold mine must carry in his hand and hold before his eyes the 'convex' utterly smashed, hated, despised, and spit on. The established model of our rocking chair's back must be felt by him to be the unpardonable sin and the crowning shame of American household art. This mechanic's soul must be filled with a reverence for curled horse hair, and his gorge must rise chronically against moss, excelsior, tow, shoddy, and rags as material for a seat for an honest man to make for a good man to sit on."

"Thus equipped, he should go reverently to a country snow bank, and fill his soul and memory with the lines of the heavenly rests made by the red cheeked, wholesome boys in the yielding slopes of the flaky walls, and carefully take their measurements and angles for the fixed principles and unchangeable rules of his new chair-making art."

THE DIRECT imitation of nature as a mode of ornament holds a secondary place in art, for expression is necessarily higher than its medium, being the manifestation of the ideal in the mind, the vesture of the type. As art advances the power of expression grows with the result of greater harmony and completeness. In place of a copy of nature in detail, we like to see a touch of life, beautiful to the mind as well as to the eye. Nature suggests the theme, but the decorator uses and adapts it to his own purpose according to his ideal.